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Daily Highlights

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W E D N E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Population programmes rank among great success stories of our time, Secretary-General tells Ceremony of World Leaders on Population Stabilization.

* Secretary-General, in address to Human Rights Forum, says human rights are founding purpose and ultimate goal of United Nations.

* Special commemorative meeting of General Assembly addressed by 200 leaders, including 91 heads of State, 8 vice-presidents, 1 crown prince and 37 prime ministers.

* Secretary-General expresses condolences following death of former UNCTAD Secretary-General Kenneth Dadzie.

* Committee on Rights of Child to hold tenth session in Geneva from 30 October to 17 November.

* DPI publishes special commemorative issue of World Media Handbook for fiftieth anniversary of United Nations.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today expressed his pride in the important role played by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other parts of the United Nations system in population programmes. In a statement at the Ceremony of World Leaders on Population Stabilization, he said he had experienced a high point at the Cairo Conference on Population and Development --more than 180 governments focusing on improving the quality of life of women and men everywhere.

Population programmes were one of the great success stories of our time, the Secretary-General stressed. During the 1960s, the world's population had grown by more than 2 per cent annually, with an average of five births for each woman. Since then, the growth rate had fallen to 1.6 per cent, with only three births for each woman.

"There is still a long way to go," he went on to say. "But population programmes have made a difference. A difference in the number of people that the planet must sustain. A difference in the progress made towards social and

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economic development. And, most important, a difference in the health, well-being and aspirations of families around the world."

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In celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, no theme is more important than the rights of the human person, according to the Secretary-General. In an address to the Human Rights Forum today, he said human rights were the founding purpose and ultimate goal of the Organization. The history of human rights law and practice was also the history of the United Nations itself.

The General Assembly had consistently worked to broaden and deepen its action for human rights, he continued. Beyond that, the Organization had pushed forward the frontiers of human rights to encompass new fields: genocide, slavery, torture, and the elimination of discrimination based on race, sex or religious convictions.

"We can and must go further," the Secretary-General concluded. Democracy -- both within and among States -- is ultimately the sole true guarantor of human rights. Much of what we can do can be termed diplomacy for democracy. And development must now centre on the rights of the human person."

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The three-day special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations was the largest ever gathering of world leaders. It was addressed by 91 heads of State, eight vice-presidents, one crown prince, 37 prime ministers, 10 deputy prime ministers, 21 foreign ministers, nine chairmen of delegations and 23 observers -- a total of 200 speakers.

The dominant theme of the meeting was reform of the United Nations. Many speakers called for an expansion of the membership of the Security Council. The need for greater transparency, democratization and accountability in the Council and other United Nations organs was stressed. Speakers deplored the current financial crisis, and highlighted the need for Member States to pay their dues in full and on time.

The meeting concluded with the adoption of the "Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations," exactly 50 years after the Charter entered into force. It declared that the anniversary must be seized as an opportunity to redirect the Organization to greater service to humankind, especially to those who were suffering and were deeply deprived. "This is the practical and moral challenge of our time."

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today expressed deep condolences to the family of Kenneth Dadzie, former Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), who died this morning in London. When Mr. Dadzie concluded his term of office on 31 March 1994, Mr. Boutros-Ghali described him as an outstanding civil servant who had demonstrated the highest intellectual skills and deepest dedication to the ideals of the United Nations.

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The Committee on the Rights of the Child will hold its tenth session in Geneva from 30 October to 17 November. The Committee will discuss the promotion and protection of children's rights in Italy, Ukraine, Germany, Senegal, Portugal and the Holy See. It will devote particular attention to the administration of juvenile justice.

The Committee, a 10-member panel of independent experts, is charged with monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. To date, 180 States have ratified the Convention, which is the most complete statement of children's rights ever made.

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The Department of Public Information (DPI) has published a special commemorative issue of the World Media Handbook for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The 1995 Handbook is a directory of selected media and related data covering more than 180 countries. It includes information on more than 1,300 daily newspapers, 1,900 magazines, 250 news agencies, 1,200 broadcasting organizations, and 400 journalists' associations.

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